

# Executive acts on complaints

A note of urgency in a debate at Annual Conference has brought prompt action from VICCSO Executive to highlight further the staffing problems which confront our member schools.

Solutions must be found to disturbing statements revealed in the Conference transcript:

- "We had seven principals in eight years since January 1969."
- "The Education Department claimed to have a policy that was going to stabilise staff. This is not happening."
- "Our principals arrive as a stepping stone for a bigger and brighter career later, or as a watering hole to recuperate until retirement."
- "The Department still shows little regard for the needs of children in its planning and our school has paid a high price for this attitude."

VICCSO has arranged a seminar in November (see panel this page) to discuss all aspects of the problem.

## What our schools reported

Questionnaires returned by VICCSO member schools show a staff turnover of 30 to 45 per cent.

### CONFERENCE REPORT

Turnover of teachers in primary schools is 39.4% (based on a sample of 560 schools) and 34.4% in high schools (based on a sample of 175 schools).

Turnover figures have been calculated for schools within regions, sizes and areas and are shown below.

Figures shown in these tables are only for new teachers up to March 31, 1976, so that replacements for teachers leaving the school during the second and third terms have not been counted.

If they had, the turnover shown would have been higher.

#### PERCENTAGE TURNOVER WITHIN REGIONS 1976

REGION	PRIMARY		HIGH	
	No. of schools	%	No. of schools	%
Sunshine	30	40.5	20	38.7
Preston	53	45.6	18	30.3
Prahran	31	43.4	15	29.5
Knox	82	37.1	24	25.4
Frankston	75	37.5	21	31.7
Gippsland	63	34.4	17	31.2
Benalla	47	31.6	17	33.8
Bendigo	55	41.9	12	35.2
Geelong	62	42.2	18	29.9
Ballarat	36	40.2	3	35.8
Horsham	26	31.0	10	36.0
Total	560	39.4	175	31.4

It will be seen that Preston has the highest turnover in primary schools at 45.6% and Horsham the lowest at 31.0%.

In high schools Sunshine has the worst turnover at 38.7% and Knox the best at 25.4%.

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## school bell

NOVEMBER 1976

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VICTORIAN  
COUNCIL OF SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS

CIRCULATION EXCEEDS 10,000

### SEMINAR

**RICHMOND HIGH SCHOOL**  
The Boulevard

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28**

**10 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

### STAFFING PROBLEMS AND TEACHER TURNOVER

Views of all interested parties  
sought

LIGHT LUNCH AVAILABLE

## Works funds cause alarm

Two urgency items were put forward by the Executive Committee and were adopted by the recent Annual Conference:

● This Conference views with alarm the continuing serious shortage of funds for capital works for Victorian schools.

The State Budget allocation is insufficient to provide adequately for new pupil places and minimum maintenance needs.

Practically no finance is available for the urgent requirement for up-grading buildings and providing adequate facilities in existing schools.

This Conference supports the Victorian Government and calls on the Federal Government to provide immediately a special grant to enable Victorian State schools to be made

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# REVIEW



# "Act urgently on excursion safety"

In 1971, in the United Kingdom, eight children were lost in a ski party.

Did you know that under present regulations in Primary Division of the Victorian Education Department, it is possible for staff to take 100 children to the snow for the day with only the approval of the principal, and with no specialist staff required?

In 1975, at the VICCSO Annual Conference, Essendon North PS put forward the following resolution:

"That VICCSO request the Education Department to ban all student hiking trips unless accompanied by teachers fully qualified in bushcraft and survival and further, the ratio of teacher to student be one trained teacher for each six students."

It was referred to the Executive for action and VICCSO has been looking closely at the situation.

Yes, there is a ratio laid down in primary schools, but it is one teacher to 20 students and applies to overnight trips as well as day excursions.

The Department runs courses but they are optional and there are too few people available to run them.

However, if trained and experienced adults outside the teaching service were to be used on excursions, the Education Act would need to be changed. The same bar applies to teacher aides.

The owners of camps throughout the State have expressed concern over school standards.

**The next five years will be critical and after that highly dangerous.**

What then are the solutions?

● All parents should be aware of the dangers.

The School Camps Branch puts out

The Policy of the Victorian Federation of State School Parents' Clubs on school excursions is:

"That Federation recommends to the Education Department that school excursions involving Preparatory to Grade 3 be accompanied by adults in the ratio of one adult to eight pupils; Grades 4 to 6 to be accompanied by adults in the ratio of one adult to 12 pupils."

an excellent little booklet, "Safety in Adventure Activities", which VICCSO recommends for parent reading. It costs \$1.25 from the Government Printer in Parliament Place or 356 Collins Street. One copy is distributed to every school and another four free on request.

● More personnel in Camps Branch so that all teachers are aware of dangers and many more are highly trained.

● A change in the Education Act to allow for the use of experienced adults outside the teaching service.

● Outdoor education courses should be accepted as study leave accreditation for teachers.

Only when parents see some action in these last three areas will they know that the Department really believes in outdoor education and the education of the whole child.

Lip service is not good enough where lives are concerned. — Una F. Hodgson.

## How Bank works out commission

The State Bank has provided VICCSO with an outline of policy on pupils' banking habits.

Its manager for school activities (Mr John R. McPherson) wrote recently:

"There are two types of school banks established at Victorian primary and secondary schools throughout Victoria:

"1. School banks established at schools irrespective of size or location, where teachers receive the students' deposits.

"2. School banks established at schools where special passbook wallets containing each student's passbook and deposits are collected by Bank staff from a central point at the school and returned to the school before the next bank day.

"The method of calculating school bank commission is as follows:

"(a) At schools where deposits are received by teachers, a commission of \$3 per half year or 5% (whichever amount is the greater) on the total deposits received at the school each half-year, is payable to the school.

"(b) At schools where deposits are received in special passbook wallets, a commission of \$3 per half-year or 3% on the total deposits received in wallets each year, is payable to the school.

"School bank commission cheques are payable to the school at the commencement of the school year and on July 14 each year.

"We acknowledge that the Principal has the responsibility to distribute the commission in accordance with the Educational Department's requirements."

## Job problems for school leavers

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National Youth Council of Australia and the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

● Support your children in their unemployment by being ready to discuss the situation with them and be ready to advise them when asked.

● Through the local council, progress resident associations, party political branches and voluntary agencies such as school councils, mothers' clubs and Rotary, raise unemployment as a community issue that requires community-initiated solutions.

Some of last year's school leavers who have been unable to find jobs have set up self-help programs for and by

the unemployed. They operate differently but with each the young unemployed can meet others who are unemployed, sit and talk, plan action strategies and discuss how to get jobs.

Working under the sponsorship of the National Youth Council of Australia, groups such as the Youth Organisation for the Unemployed (Fitzroy), P.A.C.E. (Frankston), Youth Employment Group (Ballarat) and the Geelong Y.C.W. Unemployment group are preparing, with professional assistance, a booklet on how to establish and operate a self-help group and a pamphlet on job hunting and the unemployment situation.

The pamphlet will include

information on employer expectations, how to look for work, the interview situation and the right to unemployment benefit.

Amidst the concern, the unemployed school leaver has taken quite a bashing from politicians, educationalists and employers.

They have been called "dregs", "illiterates" and "bludgers."

Don't reinforce this scapegoating by blaming your children for being unemployed.

Your support is critical if they are to get jobs now and in the future.

Further information may be obtained from the National Youth Council of Australia, 23 Clarendon Street, East Melbourne (419 5633).